1	2	3	4
17.	Maharashtra	204 & 211	526
18.	Manipur	150	523
19.	Meghalaya	Extn. of 40 & Extn. of 62	120
20.	Mizoram	44A, 150 & 154	376
21.	Nagaland	150	36
22.	Orissa	200, 201, 203, 215 & 217	1595
23.	Pondicherry	Extn. of 45A	20
24.	Punjab	Extn. of 64, 70, 71 & 95	436
25.	Rajasthan	Extn. of 11 A, Extn. of 65, 76, 79, 79A, 89 & 90	1496
26.	Sikkim	NIL	—
27.	Tamil Nadu	Extn. of 45A, 45B, Extn. of 67, 205, 207, 208, 209, 210, 219 & 220	1277
28.	Tripura	44A	65
29.	Uttaranchal	72, 72A, 73, 74, 87, 94, 108 & 109	702
30.	Uttar Pradesh	2A, 24A, 25A, 56A, 56B, Extn. of 58, 72, 72A, 73, 74, 75, Extn. of 75, 76, 86, 91, 92. 93, 94, 96 & 97	2055
31.	West Bengal	Extn. of 60, 80 & 81	245
		TOTAL:	19595

Lowering of telephone charges

*377. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether telephone is essential for lower middle class and retired employees;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to increase the number of free calls and reduce the rental charges to help the poor subscriber; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD M AH A J AN): (a) to (c) One of the objectives and targets of New telecom Policy' 99

is to ensure availability of affordable and effective communications for the citizens. It also contemplates to make available telephone on demand by the year, 2002.

The fixation and regulation of tarrif is a function of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI). For this purpose, TRAI issues telecom Tariff Order (TTO) from time to time. The Telecommunication Tariff Order (TTO) 1999 as notified by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) recognizes that social objectives of Telecommunication policy are important particularly in relation to those sections of the society for whom afordability is the most important issue. Thus, the TTO has specified monthly rentals, which are different for rural and urban subscribers. Monthly rentals specified in TTO, 1999 have been purposely kept below cost for rural and small sized exchanges so that basic telephone services are largely affordable. Presently, Government have no proposal to increase the number of free calls and reduce the rental charges.

Upgradation of PCO centres

*378. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the All India PCO franchisees Association has appealed to Government to upgrade PCO centres to Multiple Internet Services Centres' generate revenue for PCOs; and

(b) if so, whether Government propose to accede to this request?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) Yes, Sir. Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) has been requested by the All India PCO Franchisee Association through a consortium of 13 companies for upgrading PCO centres to Multiple Internet Service Centres. No such request from the Association has been received by Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL).

(b) MTNL has conveyed 'No Objection', in principle, to the request of the Association for voluntary phased upgradation of PCO